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Peggy's Holiday Guest

By L. A. ROSE

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"WHAT do you think about asking Mrs. Jamieson?" asked Peggy Everett doubtfully. "She's so alone in the world, except for that nephew that never shows up."

Belle Sperry, who was writing down the list of guests-to-be, tapped her red lips with her pencil, thoughtfully. "We intended to ask all the old ladies of the neighborhood. It would be rather a shame to omit anyone just because she seems snobbish."

"You're right," said Peggy promptly. "Write her down. Now how many does that make?"

The two girls continued their plans for the holiday party, and were soon as absorbed as if preparing their own coming-out festivities.

As a matter of fact, Peggy and Belle were past the age of debuts. They had been art students together in New York and at the time of Peggy's trouble—the departure without a word of the man who had just asked her to marry him—Belle had looked after her like a mother. Recently they had pooled their resources and bought an old-fashioned house in this old-fashioned town and were making a fair income out of all sorts of odds and ends of jobs, along with Belle's free-lancing and Peggy's pen and-ink sketches.

The holiday party had been Peggy's idea. "It must be dreadful," she had said to Belle, "to be old and spend all your time with people not of your own generation. Sometime I'm going to get all the old ladies together and let them talk of days gone by.

The girls had fairly outdone themselves in preparation.

They had all arrived but one, and that one Mrs. Jamieson, when the telephone rang. Peggy, with a glance at Belle which said, "I knew she'd back out at the last minute," flew to answer. When she came back, her face was troubled.

"Oh, she's coming," she whispered to Belle, who was giving the final touches to the attractive table "but she's bringing a guest! I didn't quite catch the name, but some relative from abroad who just dropped in."

As it happened, Peggy was busy in the kitchen when Mrs. Jamieson arrived, and it was Belle who received her and her guest. Two minutes later, Belle had flown out to Peggy, with startled eyes. "Peggy, darling, what shall I do? It's—it's Paul. I am sure he doesn't know! Nor his aunt, of course. She's having the loveliest time, as friendly as can be with everyone!"

She rattled on, giving Peggy time to recover herself, for the girl had gone dead white. Then she rallied. "Of course, there's a terrible mistake somewhere. He couldn't come so casually, if he knew. We'll have to go through with it, but I can't possibly see him or let him know I am here. I'll just keep out of sight. Say I'm sick or—or anything!"

So the uninvited and unspeakably unwelcome guest had Peggy's place while Peggy carved turkey, replenished the vegetables and cranberry sauce, and cut the pies quite as if her heart was not in utter torment.

Just once she caught a glimpse of him when the door swung wide behind Belle, bearing out the turkey between courses.

Afterwards Peggy sat on the top stair in the hall above, listening to the chatter below. She had been quite wrong as to what they would talk about. They were concerned, every one of them, with the present, with radio concerts, bobbed hair, the latest picture.

Suddenly, above the others, she heard Paul.

"I wonder," he was saying quietly, "if any of you here have ever heard of a Miss Margaret Everett? I have come from England to find her, and heard that, at one time, she lived here."

"Why—why, that's our absent hostess!" she heard some one say.

Her hand at her throat, Peggy leaned forward, straining to hear.

She thought Paul's voice sounded shaken. "Aunt Harriet, this is impossible! You spoke of a Peggy—oh, I wonder—where is she?"

Two minutes later Paul faced Peggy across the empty dining-room table.

"There can be nothing to say," Peggy was saying sternly.

"But—oh, listen!" pleaded Paul. "I accepted your note at the time as inevitable, but lately I have wondered if I came back, there would be a chance—"

"My note?" asked the girl.

"Why, yes," said Paul. "I have carried it with me."

From his pocketbook, he took a wrinkled bit of note paper and passed it across to Peggy.

Peggy read it silently. Read it twice.

"Have considered your proposal and cannot accept. My answer is an unconditional 'No!'"

For a moment her eyes were blank. Then they filled with tears. "Oh, the wasted years," she murmured. "This was written to an advertising man who wanted to use a picture of mine for a hosiery advertisement. Some way, it got into the wrong envelope. Oh, Paul!"

"If I hadn't remembered my aunt lived here—the place I had traced you to—and visited her."

"And if I hadn't had the party—who knows," said Peggy. Then, "Never mind," she said. "It happened—and it's the best holiday I ever had!"

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC

By the Rev. Charles E. Schaeffer, D. D.

January 30th. How Show Our Loyalty to Our Church? (Denominational Day). Romans 12: 3-13.

Someone has defined loyalty as "the soul of religion." It is certainly one of the noblest and most reliable qualities which any human being can possess. Without loyalty there can be no real progress in any department of life. The business of the world cannot be carried forward by persons who are untrue, disloyal and who have no sense of fidelity and devotion. This is especially true with reference to the three greatest institutions in the world: the family, the church, the state. Society cannot long continue without loyalty in the family. Nothing so quickly wrecks society as infidelity in the family relationships. Loyalty of husband to wife, wife to husband, parents to children, children to parents forms the very foundation of human society. The same thing is true in the state. There we call it patriotism. No state can long exist or can perform its highest mission to the world unless its citizens are absolutely loyal and devoted to its principles and to the powers that be.

This is likewise true with reference to the church and even with reference to one's own denomination. We hear a great deal these days about the evils of denominationalism. Many of our weaknesses in Protestantism are laid to the door of our denominational and sectarian divisions. A great deal can be said against the undue emphasis on denominationalism, but denominationalism, even, is not without its virtues. In Protestantism we cannot do without denominations, but denominations must not become ends in themselves. They must be means to an end. To build up a denomination simply to make a great big name for itself is wrong, but to build up the denomination in order to render the larger service to humanity is right. "No man liveth to himself," and so no church ought to live unto itself. Even the so-called Community church which is nonsectarian, is in great danger of becoming only another denomination. Much harm has been done by advocating a vague, insipid, colorless church relationship. Wherever denominationalism is strong, progress is being made, as for instance among the Lutherans, the Methodists and the Baptists. Ideally there should be only one church, but this one body has many members. Denominations should drop the spirit of competition and adopt that of co-operation. There are some people who are so broad and liberal in their views that they are never able to concentrate on any one particular body. There are those who sit so lightly by their own church that they never amount to anything. In our Christian Endeavor pledge each member promises, "I will support my own church in every way." That is a big order. The church is a family. You can honor and respect every woman in your community, but you can marry only one wife, and as you are true and loyal to her you are at the same time faithful to others. There are those who follow what may be called the "free love" course in their church relations. They resort to "trial" unions with the church and easily fit from one to another. This is almost as bad and hazardous as in the family relation. Shakespeare says,

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow,
As the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

So, to thine own church be loyal and thou canst not then be false to anyone. The church cannot be run with an army of renegades and runaways and with slackers and slickers. Can your church, can your pastor depend on you? The church will never be defeated by foes from without, but it is seriously crippled by her disloyal and disobedient children from within. The church is most seriously wounded in the house of her friends. Now, there are several ways by which we can show our loyalty to our own church:

First—by knowing our church. We can scarcely be loyal to any institution unless we know at least something about it. We must know the history, the organization, the program, the ideals of the church. We should understand the place which the church holds in the world, what its mission really is. People perish for lack of this knowledge. It is amazing how little most people do know about their church. We ought to know the government, the doctrines, the literature, the hymnology, the institutions, the Boards, the leaders of the church. This knowledge is obtained from the church papers, from books and pamphlets, from association with other members, from attendance of gatherings and meetings of various kinds. We can not be very strongly attached to something of which we know nothing.

Second—by working. We learn to know by doing. When we work for the church we become attached to it. When we enter into its program and seek to relate our efforts to the same we form a bond of attachment to the church. We must attend its services, give to it our support, be willing to sacrifice in its behalf. Those people who fail to work for the church, who simply live off it instead of for it, are never thoroughly loyal. They are interested only in the loaves and the fishes. They are willing to recognize the church when they need her, but they have no real, vital sense of attachment or affection for the church.

Third—by talking. Our loyalty must express itself in telling others about our church. Perhaps many of us are too reticent. We shun publicity. We seem to be afraid of letting our denominational light shine before others. Sometimes we are asked, 'Reformed What?' and most of our people can't even answer. You can scarcely ever talk with a Methodist or ever give him a chance to speak in public without him telling you or his audience about the great church to which he belongs. We must advocate and talk up for the church. There are too many people who talk about and against their church. They resort to all kinds of carping criticism and censure. Why not sometimes be telling others about the wonderful things that your church does and stands for!

Fourth—by praying. How many of us make the work of our denomination a matter of sincere, conscientious prayer? Are not most of our prayers exceedingly selfish. Do we include our church, our pastor, the organizations of the church, our fellow-members in the prayers which we offer? Perhaps one reason why we don't pray more for the church is because we don't love the church enough. "He prayeth best who loveth best."

Loyalty to our church can be expressed in the following acrostic:

L—learn
O—obedience
Y—youth
A—activity
L—love
T—truth
Y—yearning.

THE SWEETNESS OF HOME

One of the favorite songs of the American people has been "Home, sweet home." The highbrows would call it too sugary, yet it does express a universal sentiment. However, the present feeling is that a home and its surroundings need not merely to be sweet, but to have elements of strength and fineness.

Your home may be endeared to you by many sweet memories, but if it is run down and decadent, that sweetness has a bitter taste. To make that home sweet according to modern standards, it needs to be lovingly cared for so it shall be attractive. The same principle applies to your home town. Your associations with it, instead of being sweet, will have a tinge of the bitter, if it does not make itself a place of which to be proud.



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Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of Day and Evening Schools, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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Lesson for January 30

THE CHRISTIAN OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

LESSON TEXT—Luke 4:1-13; I Cor. 10:12, 13.

GOLDEN TEXT—In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Obeying God Always.

JUNIOR TOPIC—How to Stand Against Temptation.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—How Christ Helps the Tempted.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—How to Overcome Temptation.

Christ's temptation was Messianic. No one has ever been tempted just like He was—led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4:11). While we are not tempted as He was, the devil uses the same methods on us. This temptation was not:

1. A preparation for His work, but rather its first conflict. In His baptism we have the symbolic act of the dedication of Himself to the work of redemption through the cross—the making full a righteousness.

2. It was not to see if Christ would stand fast, nor to see if He would fail under the most crucial test. He could not have failed.

3. It was to show Christ as an object upon which we may rest our faith with unshaken confidence. He came as the second man, the head of the new race. The temptation therefore was a demonstration of the inseparableness of the divine and human natures in the incarnation.

I. The Temptation of Christ (Luke 4:1-13).

1. The place (v. 1).

The wilderness of Judea. The first man, Adam, was tempted in a garden with the most pleasant surroundings. The second man, Jesus Christ, was tempted in a barren wilderness surrounded by wild beasts (Mark 1:13).

2. The method (vv. 2-12).

Christ as the world's Redeemer sustained a three-fold relationship—Son of Man, the Messiah and Son of God, therefore Satan made each one a ground of attack.

(1) As Son of Man (vv. 2-4).

Satan made his first assault upon Him as a man by appealing to the instinct of hunger. Satan urged Him to use His divine power and convert a stone into bread. Hunger is natural and sinless. Real human life experiences hunger. The temptation was in satisfying a right hunger in a wrong way. To have yielded in this case though His hunger was desperate, would have been to renounce the human limitations which He had taken for our sins. In the incarnation He became identified with humanity, so He chose to abide in fellowship with man.

(2) As Messiah (vv. 5-8).

Here the temptation was to grasp His rightful dominions by false means. The devil offered to surrender unto Him the world if He would adopt his methods—worship him. The force of this temptation was in the fact that the kingdoms of the world are Christ's by God's covenant with Him. God's method by which Jesus was to possess the world was the sacrificial death on the cross.

(3) As Son of God (vv. 9-12).

Here Satan tries to induce Christ to presume upon God's care. He quotes a Messianic Psalm to induce Him to so act. To do the spectacular thing in order to get notice is to fall into Satan's temptation. For Jesus to have placed Himself in danger in order to get God's special help in delivering Him would have been to sin.

(4) Christ's defense (vv. 4, 8, 12).

It was the Word of God. He met and repulsed the enemy with "It is written." Our defense is God's Word.

(5) The issue (v. 13).

Satan was vanquished.

II. The Temptation of Believers (I Cor. 10:12, 13).

1. Temptation is to be expected (v. 12).

From the appearance of Satan in the Garden of Eden on down through the ages men and women have been assailed by the tempter. These facts are God's admonitions unto us upon whom the ends of the world are come. Caution is always necessary. Overweaning self-confidence is most perilous to those who rest in the security of their divine election while neglecting a life of holiness.

2. Divine help available (v. 13).

All temptations which come to us are those which are common to the race. No one should surmise that his temptation is peculiar. God is faithful and will not allow the temptation to go beyond the ability of the one tempted. He will provide a way of escape.

Through the Needle's Eye

Before the camel passed through the eye of the needle, they took the burdens off his back.—King's Business.

God's Cross

God lays His cross upon those whom He loves, and those who bear it patiently gain much wisdom.—Luther.

Praise

Praise is contentment rippling over into gladness, like the music of the brook.—Mark Guy Pearse.

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